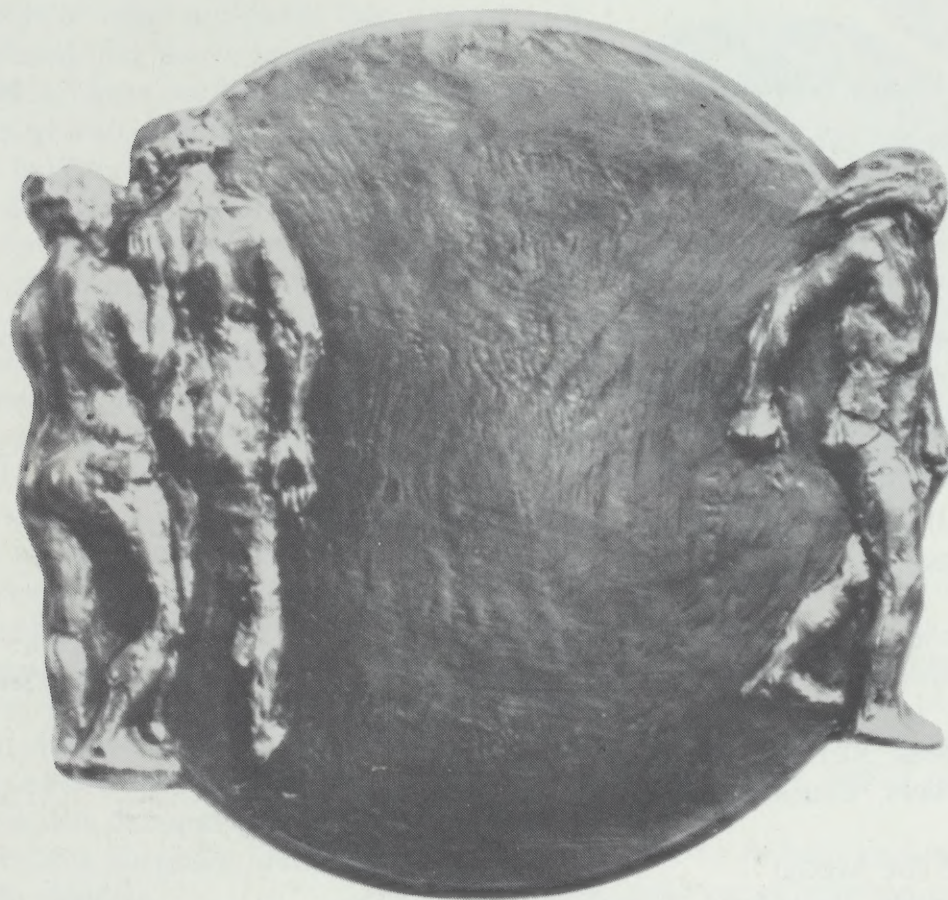


Fall 1989



MEDALLIC SCULPTURE

Official Publication of the American Medallion Sculpture Association

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The editors of *Medallic Sculpture* encourage inquiries about guidelines for articles proposed for publication in *Medallic Sculpture*. Also welcome are black and white glossy photographs of recent medallic work, including the name of the artist, title of work, date, method of production, dimensions, and information regarding availability. These materials or requests for AMSA membership information can be sent to AMSA President Beverly Mazze, 18th Floor, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 10003.

Cover: *The Prodigal Son*, Leonda Finke

Medals and Coins

Elizabeth Jones

I am pleased to speak to you about medals and coins, two fields of relief sculpture that seem so closely related, yet prove in practice so different. These remarks are based on personal observations and experiences made in moving from one field to the other.

To begin with the obvious, designing coins means designing for mass production. The emphasis is on production, because the coin designer does not have to worry about sales since the Mint has a captive market. There is, of course, one notorious exception where the Mint tried to compete with paper currency and got stuck with an inventory of half a billion Susan B. Anthony dollars. But in principle demand is unlimited, even where the public does not seem to have any use for a certain denomination like the penny, which inevitably ends up in bowls and jars on America's dressers. When some years ago the annual production reached a staggering 13 billion pennies, it meant that 65% of the Mint's total output was devoted to a coin that, for all intents and purposes, decades of inflation had made obsolete.

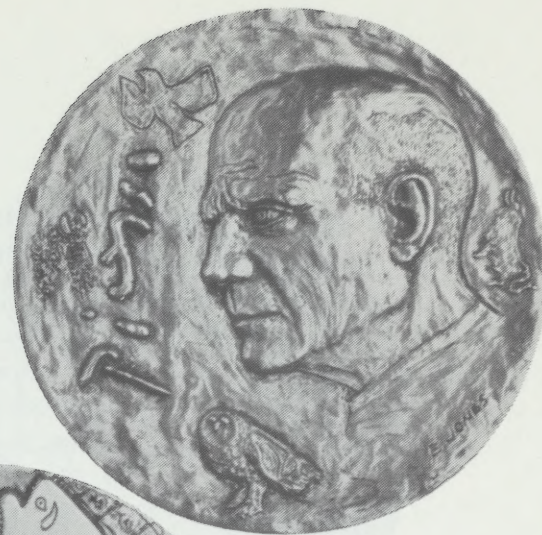
The design of coins is affected by the technological requirements of mass production. And even if an aspect of production appears at first strictly mechanical or metallurgical, it will ultimately lead to adjustments of the design. These adjustments are often microscopic but nonetheless time-consuming since everything done to the surface of a coin has to be done within extremely narrow tolerances. For good reason the Mint's unit of measurement is a thousandth of an inch. This already exceptional degree of precision which modern coining methods demand is complicated by additional needs such as the prevention of counterfeiting, compatibility with vending

machines, or accommodating coin collectors. It even sometimes appears to me as though our constant struggle to keep faulty coins off the market has no other purpose than to maintain the value of the few that do escape and become those highly prized collectors' items.

On purely artistic grounds there are rather basic differences between coins and medals. One is the limitation of subject matter, as coinage in some countries more than in others is restricted to an imagery that represents governmental authority and its historical sources and traditions. The vocabulary of national emblems is necessarily finite, as is the potential for variation, and anyone aspiring to become an artist at the U.S. Mint could not find a better way to prepare than by studying eagles in their natural and heraldic states.

Because of the difference in size, coins and medals demand a different design approach. Coins are not simply reductions of medals but have their own requirements of composition. But let me illustrate with some examples of my own work the virtues of the medal which I rather came to miss in the design of coins.

1. The medallist, at least in theory, has the choice of the subject, as I did in 1973 by selecting Picasso in Cesare Johnson's "Great Artists" series. Obviously there are more



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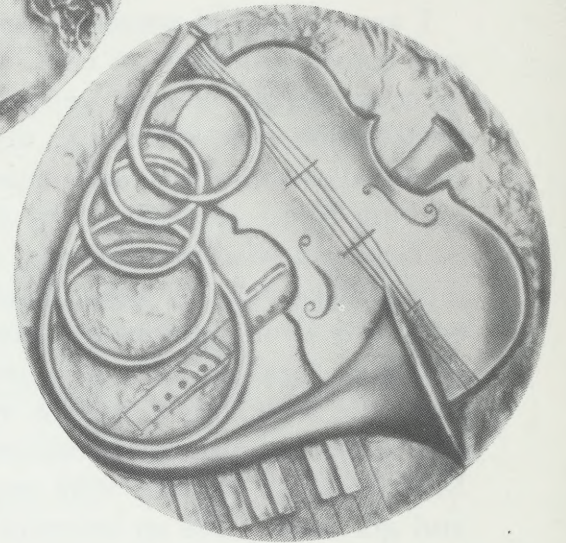
N.B.: These remarks are excerpted from a talk given by AMSA member Elizabeth Jones to a recent annual meeting of AMSA.



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options for the treatment of the subject which, in the case of the Picasso medal's reverse, led to a rather free association of elements from several of his masterpieces.

2. The revival of the medal in the last decade has much increased the number and variety of subjects the medallist can explore. An example is this medal which Medallic Art commissioned to celebrate the Holy Year. The medallist has a freer hand to create new symbols and representations of traditional concepts, as I was able to do for the reverse of the Holy Year medal.
3. Another advantage the medallist has over the coin designer is the possibility of a more personal interpretation of a prominent person or historical figure, as I tried in my Mozart medal of 1974. And, last but not least, the medallist has the technical option to create a work in high relief, as I did on the Mozart reverse, and to achieve a more sculptural quality than can ever be realized in a coin.

This may give you an idea of some of the adjustments I had to make in joining the Mint and in limiting myself almost exclusively to the design of coins. I had, of course, the advantage of making this transition inside the Mint, where the strictures governing coin design were much easier to comprehend than from the outside. Being there also made it easier to understand the particular problems faced by free-lance sculptors, as well as by staff, whenever the Mint had to execute an outside design.

4. This is a historical case in point, the earliest model cast in 1909 of the Lincoln portrait by Victor D. Brenner in the Mint's collection.

The original, executed for the centennial of Lincoln's birth, was a rectangular plaque from which this seven-inch-wide circle was cut out. The portrait bust protrudes at the bottom from the flat, even slightly convex



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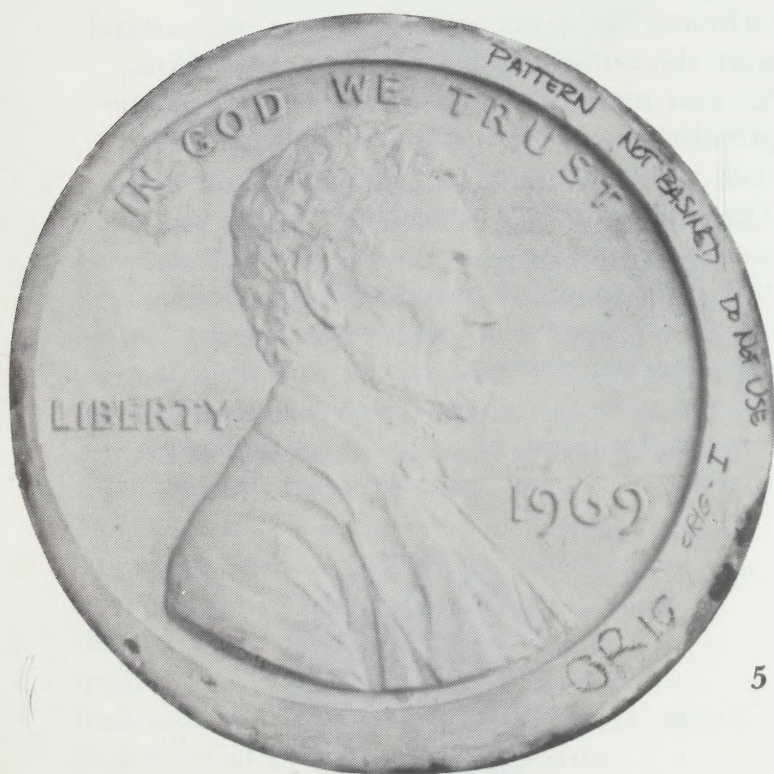
background. There is no border, and while the word "Liberty" and the date are already in their final position, the inscription "In God We Trust" is still missing. Obviously, this model is still in an "uncoinable" condition.

In a subsequent state the Lincoln portrait appears within a larger field, although the diameter of five inches indicates that it is already a reduction. Yet the place of the "In God We Trust" legend is still not determined nor, as the inscribed circles reveal, is the coin's ultimate diameter and its relation to the image. Only the outer-most circle seems drawn definitively enough through the bottom of the bust to suggest that the decision to sacrifice this much of the original had been made.

engravers and technicians have to solve for each new generation of coins. Most likely the master dies of the 1960s had been worn out. Lettering may have spread to the border causing the infamous wire edge, and thus may have forced the production of a new plaster model and the repetition of all subsequent operations.

Galvanos, formerly used for the Janvier reduction process, reflect the definitive plaster version, and the galvano of the one-cent obverse which was identified by the number 197-, was the father of all the master dies of the 1970s. Each year the next year's last digit is carved by hand into the steel master die.

Although an approved master die is used, each new annual version is still subjected to the rigors of a trial strike to satisfy the exacting standards of coinage. What the strikes try to establish specifically is the



5. The plaster model of 1969 for the penny cuts across time and demonstrates the continuous necessity of reworking established designs. The remarks written on the border "pattern not basined," "do not use," "original" illustrate the range of problems



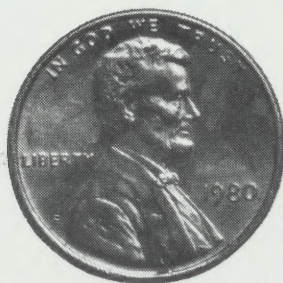
correct height and the placement, as well as the fill of the new digit, which in the case of the penny occupies a particularly critical

border area. Known as the interior diameter, or ID, this is an area of unpredictable behavior where the metal tends to flow outward under the impact of the coining press.

The characteristics of each metal, as well as the diameter of the coin, set the upper limits of the pressure that can be applied which, in the case of the one-cent piece, lies around 38 to 40 tons. Application of maximum tonnage is, however, usually necessary to press a coin in one strike, and a one-strike operation is necessary to satisfy the requirements of mass production. In contrast, the comparatively small editions of medals allow multiple strikes, and generally a more craftsman-like execution that may include some hand finishing.

The coining process is, even from an engineer's point of view, extremely complex, and still today not thoroughly understood. Not surprisingly, it is the Office of Technology at the Mint that, in its efforts to improve the production process, is constantly looking for the artist's help and sees coining as a most logical marriage of art and technology. And indeed, every thousandth of an inch we are able to shave off a coin's relief can add ten thousand strikes to the life of a die and thus increase the Mint's profits, the so-called "seigniorage."

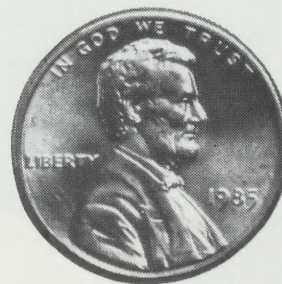
While in the past the replacement of master dies may have required a new plaster model only once every decade, the Mint is now starting from scratch each year in order to attain a higher and more even quality for all coins throughout a decade.



6. The familiar images of the one-cent obverse are meant to illustrate the remarkable continuity of this design. The 1980 coin is one of the last copper pieces, the 1985 coin is a copper-plated zinc example. Although now

produced in the billions each year, this coin has remained basically unchanged for three-quarters of a century. There was, of course, one major change of the reverse when the sheaves of wheat were replaced in 1959 with the Lincoln Memorial to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. And, of course, numismatists will also remind us of the minor changes in the beginning, especially the notorious suppression (and then reinstatement) of the designer's initials. But all in all, the coin is a unique monument to traditionalism, without parallel in any other major coin producing nation in this century. Ultimately, inflation caught up with the penny and, when the price of copper rose above the denomination value, the one-cent piece became in 1982 the copper-plated zinc penny.

To some extent, it was just as well that the design remained unchanged because the technical problems posed by the new material were daunting enough by themselves. First, the raw material, no longer produced on the premises, revealed a number of birth defects, such as black spots, that had to be overcome. Then the material—zinc being much less malleable than copper—made it much more difficult to reach the established degree of filling. Compensation was made by altering the shape of the basin and by reducing in certain parts the height of the relief by two to three-thousandths of an inch, an irrelevant dimension in most medallic work, but of



much consequence in coining. Needless to say, such interventions demanded surgical skills because the reduction of relief in the shoulder and chest area had to be accomplished without diminishing the illusion of sculptural depth.

The sides of a coin affect each other in more ways than the proverbial sense, for the basin and the relief changes on the obverse

were also prompted by the lack of fill in certain areas on the reverse. Yet such is the magic of the engraver's art that, in spite of all those complicated minute adjustments, the two versions of the one-cent piece are indistinguishable to the unaided eye.



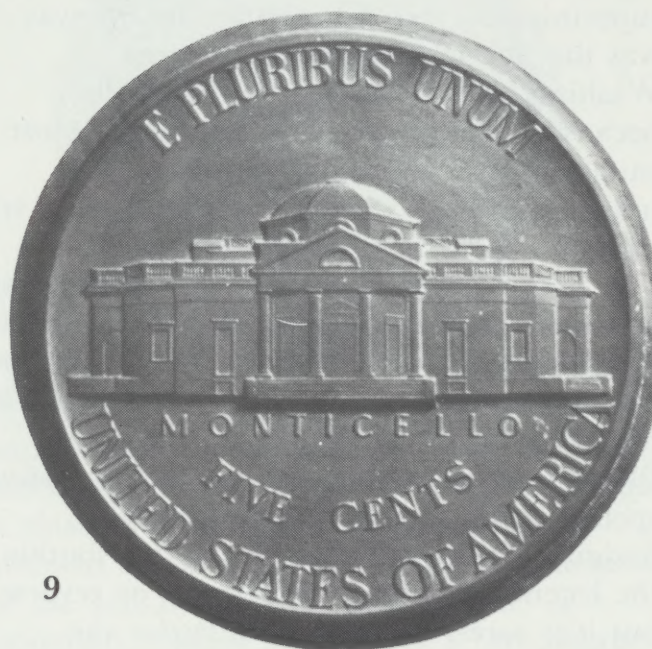
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7. I am showing this example of my work—the Lupa medal, commissioned by the Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti in 1967—to point to the almost dialectical relationship between relief and background that is a characteristic for all forms of this art, from coin surfaces to temple friezes. As a medallist I was free to choose the backgrounds and to treat them as integral parts of the composition. The she-wolf of Roman legend stands against an ample, flat background, the background of timelessness. Mints have to restrict that choice for technical and traditional reasons, and the United States tradition being classicist and oriented toward higher relief makes a concave basin mandatory, while most European mints always seemed to have preferred flat basined coins.

8. In practice, however, the sculptural potential of the concave basin cannot be fully exploited because of its technical disadvantages, such as the higher incidence of metal flow. In any case, it is the coining process that sets definite limits to the relief height which, as minimal as it is, represents probably the ultimate challenge to the



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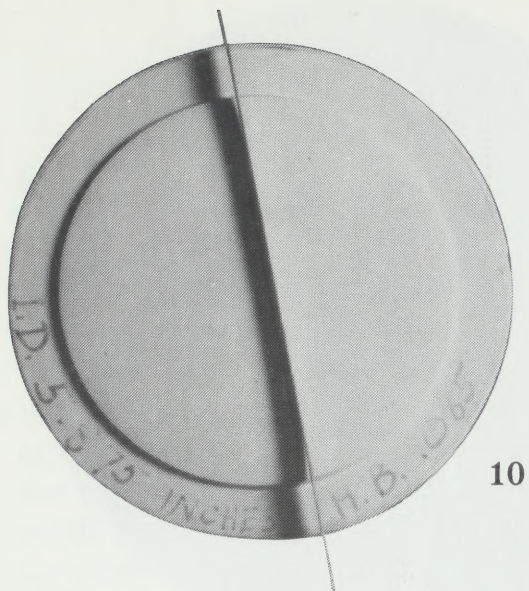


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sculptor's illusionistic capabilities. You can see in the original 1932 galvano for the 25-cent reverse that the artist John Flanagan went below the basin bottom in the area between the eagle's claws. As this was not technically feasible, it had to be corrected.

9. Here, on the other hand, you have a case where Felix Schlag in the 1938 design for the five-cent reverse raised the base of the building too high above the basin. This caused stress, particularly at the corners, and as a result there were recurring production problems ranging from lack of fill to cracking of dies.

The precision that pervades all aspects of coin production enters the design process at an early stage. All the plaster models are already executed on basins that are made with the same degree of accuracy as the master die.



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10. This is an example of an accepted basin where the minimal curvature is made barely visible through the shadow cast by the superimposed rod. This basin, by the way, was the one selected for the George Washington commemorative half dollar because it was considered to offer the most suitable curvature for my design which, indeed, resulted in a rare, successful first trial strike.

11. A minor but nonetheless quite challenging constraint for the designer of official coins is the legends mandated by law for all regular as well as commemorative issues. They include not only "In God We Trust," "Liberty," "E Pluribus Unum," but also the denomination spelled out in letters. Occasionally the designer may have a say in the distribution of the legends on either the obverse or reverse, but it is rarely possible to integrate the lettering fully into the composition.

The quandary is obvious in the plaster for the 1983 Olympic dollar where my variation of the discobolus theme was meant to project through the multiple image, an athlete in action. In my original design, by the way, I had not included the stars, but I was told to incorporate them since they were part of the games' official logo.

On the technical level the multiple image of the discobolus created similar difficulties as the nickel reverse mentioned earlier. Not only did the three superimposed contours reach maximum relief height, they also dropped off in one step at the left edge which called for some special treatment during production, such as etching the hub and master die.

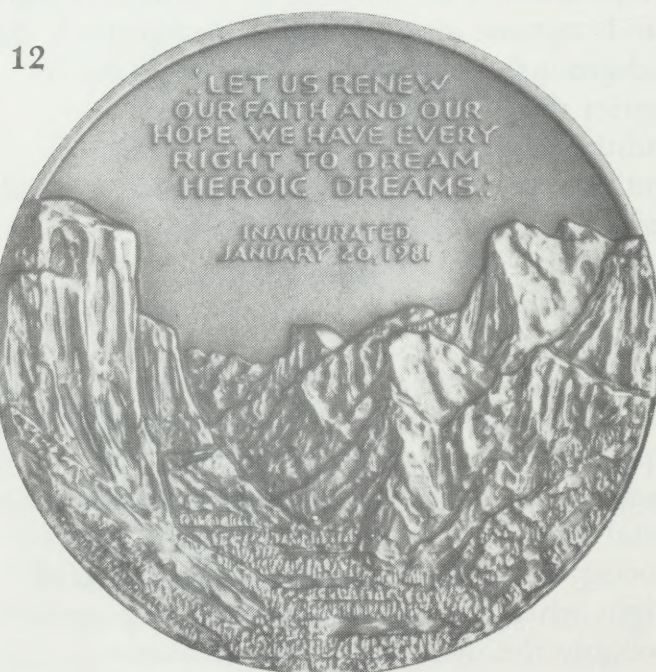
12. Another obvious but rather basic difference in designing medals and coins results from their different sizes, for it is not just a matter



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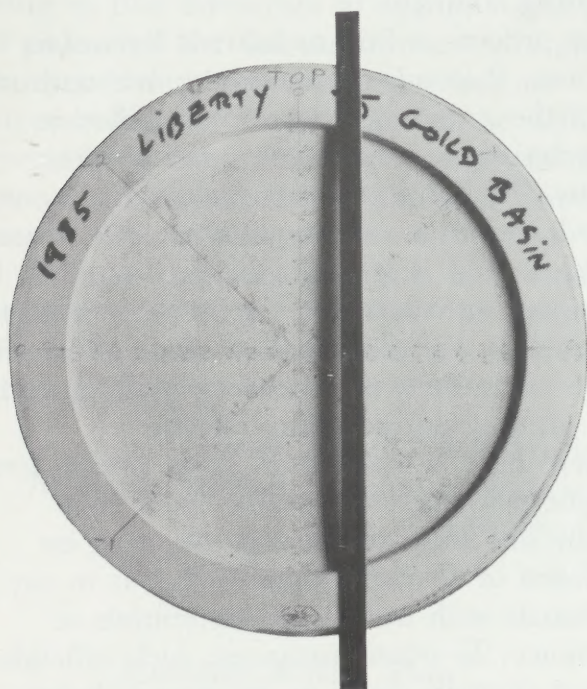
of enlarging or reducing a design. Each of the two relief forms requires its specific approach. In modeling at a larger scale, I had at first to remind myself regularly that I was not doing a medal. I finally became accustomed to the end product's reduced dimensions. Not only does the spacial context and the proportional balance change with the shrinking diameter, but also the individual elements assume a different role. They begin to crowd and can often lose all legibility.

Obviously the production methods differ according to size, even within the medal category itself. The various Congressional and



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other medals the Mint is required to produce are generally offered in a three-inch and in a half-size version, the latter usually manufactured like a coin. This applies as well to the Presidential medals issued after each inauguration. I conceived President Reagan's medal much in the way of my past portrait work for a customary size of a three-inch diameter. For the smaller 1 and 5/16 inch version, however, I had to produce a separate, slightly altered model of the reverse since this souvenir medal is produced in a single strike operation.



13. The size of the Liberty five-dollar piece was determined by the metal content: 1/4 of an ounce of gold yields a coin slightly larger than the nickel and is sizeable enough to incorporate all prescribed elements and still convey a readable image. Yet, even at this scale, the problems are considerable if the envisioned relief is of more than usual complexity. As you can see from the photograph, the basin is covered with numbers that give for each location the height measurement in thousandths of an inch. Also, in order to increase the accuracy of the Janvier transfer process, the basin itself has a smaller than usual diameter of six inches only.

Cast from the plastiline model, the plaster is ready for the next step, the carving of letters which is always done in the negative. Well visible in this oblique view of the



negative plaster are the two incuse letters in the "Liberty" legend which, of course, appear here raised. The low angle also gives a better idea of the relief levels within the extremely shallow zone above the basin.



The final positive plaster of the obverse completes the last design stage. The work is handed over to the transfer engravers who use the plaster for an epoxy mold, and this is translated on their Janvier reduction machines into the actual coin size. Design and production reached in this case a rare degree of perfection for a United States coin and warranted an MS 70 rating from the American Numismatic Association.

The result of the reduction process, which in its slowness seems to resemble organic growth, is a positive steel hub from which the negative master dies are made. While all these processes are largely mechanical, hubs and dies still require some cleaning and finishing by hand.

As I mentioned at the outset, this talk has been based on my personal experiences with medals and coins. I hope that it has been made clear that, despite the similarities between these two numismatic media, for the artist they present two very different and very challenging means of expression.

The author thanks Lee Anderson who did the photography for this article.

AMSA Testimony before the House Subcommittee on Coins

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: As President of the American Medallic Sculpture Association (AMSA), I have been asked to bring the viewpoint of the artistic community to this hearing. I am pleased to report that we are enthusiastic about pending legislation to modernize U.S. circulating coin designs. We also support the Mint's recent policy of opening coin design competitions to sculptors both within and outside the Mint.

We do not support change for the sake of change however. The design for a successful work of art springs from the idea or message to be communicated. What message is being communicated if, for example, we simply redo Presidential portraits on existing coinage? The answer is "None." Therefore if Congress mandates circulating coin design changes, we propose Congress also should mandate that those changes reflect the state of our nation at this point in time: who we are, what we stand for, what we have done, what we aspire to do.

In addition, we urge Congress to mandate the use of a quality control process for ensuring that the designs chosen are the very best the artistic community can produce. Currently there are no written policies or guidelines for ensuring that coins are well designed and that coin design competitions are conducted properly. This has led to widespread disillusionment within the artistic community, which generally believes that U.S. coin design competitions are not conducted fairly.

The perception of unfairness begins with the invitation to compete, as only selected artists receive an invitation. Those who do submit designs do not have equal opportunity to be chosen the winning coin designer. Administrative staff with no artistic credentials or background usually decide which designs

will be shown to whom and when. In a recent competition, for example, the Commission of Fine Arts only saw the "winning designs."

It is not clear who actually chooses the winning designs nor at which point in time the choice really is made. It also is not clear what the choice is based on. Worst of all, not one of the participants in the decision-making process has expertise in designing coinage, or firsthand experience in solving the aesthetic and technical problems associated with designing coinage.

The process is further marred by unfair practices. Recently for example, one and only one of the artist competitors was asked to make design revisions during the judging process. Subsequently that same artist's entry was selected as a winning design. The sense of unfairness was heightened by previous assurances to artists that, in order to assure impartiality, the identities of entrants would not be made known to decision-makers until after winning designs were chosen.

Then there is the matter of the design itself. In some instances, the design for a coin actually has been dictated to the artist by appointed or elected officials—that is to say, individuals with no artistic credentials or experience. In other instances, such officials ordered changes made to an artist's design without the artist's consent, or even without the artist's knowledge. Both the artist's rights and the integrity and validity of the artist's design are violated by these practices, which should not be allowed to continue. All interface with the artists and other interested parties regarding design decisions should rightly fall into the province of the Chief Engraver of the United States, an extremely capable artist and coin designer.

The chaotic selection process I have just described also illustrates why we urgently need a set of policies and procedures to ensure that competitions will produce the best possible designs for U.S. circulating coins. The attached exhibit details a quality-control process for creating and selecting new coin designs, which I presented to this Subcommittee on September 14, 1988. Due to time

N.B.: These remarks were presented to the House Subcommittee on Coinage in July 1989 because of deficiencies in the process for selecting designs and designers for U.S. commemorative coins. Similar testimony had been presented by AMSA in September 1988 to that same committee but without result.

constraints I am unable to describe the process to you verbally, but I respectfully request that you take the time to read it. The document includes a proposal for establishing a special committee of qualified individuals to judge coin designs. The competition process is based on tested and universally acceptable methods of judging art competitions, such as those used by the American Institute of Architects.

The past Chairman of this Subcommittee, Representative Annunzio, opened the September 1988 hearings on proposed new coinage designs by saying he was holding the hearing so that advocates of change could say their piece and the Subcommittee could get back to considering the serious problems facing this Nation. I hope you will be willing to give a little more time and thought to this subject, for I really believe that coins can be important "ambassadors" for our Nation. And if that is the case, then it is well worth the time spent to make sure that the messages conveyed by these ambassadors are what we want to say to the rest of the world.

Beverly Philip Mazze, President
American Medallic Sculpture Association
July 12, 1989

Exhibit: AMSA Plan

1. The Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint, perhaps in conjunction with the Chief of the Mint's Research and Engineering Division, should prepare a set of written guidelines for artists submitting proposals for new coin designs. These guidelines should provide the kinds of do's and do nots that artists outside the Mint need to know in order to submit technically acceptable designs. In addition, the guidelines should detail the manner of submission required for the proposed coin design (e.g., the size of the drawing, whether it should be a sketch or a rendering, the type of paper board on which the design is to be drawn, indications of depth of scale needed).
2. At the same time, a Special Advisory Committee should be formed and commence work. The composition of this committee should include a complementary mix of

knowledgeable individuals such as outlined below, who each would bring his/her special expertise to bear on the challenge of how to get the very best coin designs possible.

- A representative of the U.S. Mint, such as the Chief Engraver or a former Chief Engraver, who is knowledgeable about the technical requirements of coin production and how they interact with coin design.
- A representative of the AMSA.
- An artist/sculptor or art historian/museum curator well versed in twentieth century art.
- A curator of medallic sculpture and relief art at a museum such as the ANS.
- A curator of a numismatic collection at a museum such as the Smithsonian, who has broad-based knowledge of numismatics as well as American coinage.
- A representative of a numismatic organization such as the ANA.
- A museum curator or art historian with expertise in American Art.
- A member of the Commission of Fine Arts, to serve as liaison between that Commission and the Special Advisory Committee.
- A representative of the general public.

In addition, a representative from each of the following should be invited to attend meetings of the advisory committee as observers and to serve as liaisons with their respective groups: the House Banking Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage, the Senate Banking Committee, the Office of the Treasurer, the Director of the Mint, and the Secretary of the Treasury.

The first task of the Special Advisory Committee would be to formulate a set of aesthetic guidelines for new coinage designs. These should include suggestions on appropriate images for the proposed coin, and definition of the kinds of images that would and would not be acceptable at time of judging.

Current practices are inconsistent with the goal of obtaining the best coin designs possible. For example, some of the subjects suggested by various government officials as appropriate themes for coin designs (e.g., freedom of speech) would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to execute in clear, universally understood imagery on the small surface of a coin such as a dime. In a recent judging of designs for an invitational coin

competition, the jury decided to automatically eliminate all submissions which contained portraits. During another judging, all designs showing an athlete performing a sport were eliminated. The artists who participated in the competitions were not told beforehand that such concepts would not be acceptable.

3. The announcement of a competition to design coinage should contain both technical and aesthetic guidelines. It should be sent to the heads of organizations of artists for dissemination to their members, as well as to the general news media, numismatic publications, and art magazines.

4. Six to eight weeks after announcement of the design competition, the first round of judging should be undertaken by the Special Advisory Committee.

Current practices are totally unacceptable if we are to have the best coin designs possible. Coin design decisions currently are made by individuals with little or no expertise in either the field of numismatics or medallic/coin sculpture. Sometimes the actual decision is made by only one such individual with no consultation whatsoever with even the Commission of Fine Arts. It should be noted, however, that the overall mandate of the Commission is to decide upon public monuments and architecture—all large scale works—and thus the Commission does not include experts in small works such as coins and medals.

- In the first round of judging, the Special Advisory Committee should consider proposals for coin designs that would include the following: a) a drawing of the proposed obverse and reverse; b) a written description of the proposed design, no longer than two typewritten pages; c) an 8 1/2 x 11 vinyl sleeve containing up to 10 slides illustrating other works by the artist, or a set of black and white photographs, so that the Committee can form an idea of his/her overall artistic ability. The identities of entrants would not be known to the judges at the time of jurying. As entries are received by one of the impartial organizations represented on the committee, e.g., the ANS or the ANA, they should be assigned an identifying code corresponding to a list of artists' names maintained in confidence by such organization.

- The Special Advisory Committee should select the best six designs, and request the impartial organization to contact the artists who submitted them. These artists each would be asked to prepare a three-dimensional "sketch" of their own designs, modelled in whatever material they feel most comfortable working. The artists who prepare these three-dimensional models should receive a stipend for their efforts. The Special Advisory Committee should stipulate the maximum acceptable size of the models, which would be larger than the size of the actual coin, but much smaller than a normal basin.

- Four weeks later, the Jury should critique each of the models—still anonymously—and rank them in order from 1 (best) to 6. A representative of the Special Advisory Committee, chosen by its members, then should present the models and findings of the jury first to the Director of the Mint, and then to the Secretary of the Treasury. The Secretary would make his final selection upon consultation with the Commission of Fine Arts. The Special Advisory Committee representative and the Chief Engraver should be available to assist the Commission and the Secretary in their deliberations.

5. When the winner has been chosen and his/her identity revealed, all designs should be made available to the media for publication. In this way artists with designs that are not chosen will be able to see for themselves the differences between the winning design and theirs. In addition, the Special Advisory Committee should issue a public statement of the factors it weighed in making decisions. This will further assist artists to produce better designs in their next submissions.

The timeline for implementing this plan is approximately four months. Yet implementation should not delay issuance of new coinage designs in any way. Since the first change proposed in HR 3314 is for design of a reverse that will have a limited lifespan, the process of requesting and jurying designs for that reverse can be an abbreviated version of the plan. The second coin design competition can be held according to plan, beginning when the Mint commences work on the reverse; the third, as the Mint commences work on the second coin, and so on.

The London Missionary Society Centenary Medal

Raymond J. Hebert

*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel
to every creature.* Mark 16:15

This great "commission" has been carried out by Christian missionaries with varying degrees of success and different techniques of persuasion throughout the primitive, the medieval, and the modern periods of church history. Attesting to its success, we may note that in the third century A.D., the proportion of Christians to the whole human race was 1 to 150. Today it is about 1 to 3. As a result of the melding of church and state by Constantine the Great (272-337), missionaries from the third century onward were more or less connected with the state. It was not until the great evangelical revival of the latter part of the eighteenth century that the era of modern missions, based on associated organizations, began with the work of William Carey (1761-1834).

In 1792 Carey, a Baptist who was not only a cobbler but a linguist of the highest order, a botanist, and a zoologist, published his *Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, and the book marks a distinct point of departure in the history of Christianity. "Revival had intensified the idea of the worth of the individual soul, whether Christian or heathen, and to snatch even one brand from the burning" became a dominant impulse.

Under the influence of Carey's book, twelve ministers gathered at Kettering in October 1792 and organized the Baptist Society for Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen and subscribed £13 s2 d6. By June 1793 Carey was on his way to India. Letters from him quickened interest outside his own communion and, at meeting in the autumn of 1794, Evangelical ministers of all

Obv.: Full rigged barque under full sail l., two men in forward rigging, Union Jack to r. *Exergue:* THE SHIP DUFF SAILED FOR SOUTH SEAS 1796. *Margin:* •THE CENTENARY OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1795-1895•

Rev.: Quartered field (a) four missionaries being boiled in cauldron, anthropophagic natives watching; (b)

missionary being hanged, natives watching, palm trees in r. background; (c) missionary preaching from wagon to natives, thatched huts in background; (d) two missionaries—one prostrate, one kneeling—before enthroned ruler. *Margin:* ★ NEW GUINEA • WEST INDIES • SOUTH SEAS • AFRICA • INDIA • MADAGASCAR • MONGOLIA

White metal, bronzed, 45 mm, holed with loop



denominations resolved to appeal to their churches, especially with a view to work being started in the South Sea Islands. The chief movers in the enterprise were the Congregationalist David Bogue of Gosport and the Episcopalian Thomas Haweis, rector of Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire. With them were associated Wesleyan and Presbyterian divines and, in September 1795, the London Missionary Society, emphasizing no single form of church government, was founded.

Discussing this group, Alan Morehead wrote, "...the London Missionary Society had nothing to do with the fashionable or scientific world of Walpole and Joseph Banks. It was essentially a lower middle-class organization made up of dissenting clergymen, of lay preachers, and of respectable artisans and tradesmen who were Protestant to the core and who believed utterly in the Bible. Their faith and their proselytizing zeal were admirable but they were not perhaps absolutely suited to undertake the conversion of the South Sea islanders."

"They hated," as C. Hartley Grattan says, "nudity, dancing, sex (except within monogamous marriage), drunkenness, anything savouring of *dolce far niente*, self-induced penury, war (except in God's name), heathenism in all its protean manifestations, and Roman Catholicism....They had little interest in anthropology or in Tahitian rites and customs—indeed, they were out to suppress them. They were not collectors like Banks, nor were they concerned with scientific discoveries of any kind, nor had they any of Cook's tolerance and gift for compromise. They were practical workers in the cause of the Lord, and they were determined to recreate the island in the image of lower middle-class Protestant England."

With the subscription of £100,000 filled in June 1796, the missionaries set sail for Tahiti on August 29 of that year. "It was a strange boat load that drew up to the black sand beaches of Matavai Bay in March 1799 after sailing nearly 14,000 miles without sighting land, perhaps the longest ocean journey ever known. The company of 39 included only four ordained clergymen, the rest being made up of butchers, carpenters, weavers, tailors, harness-makers, bricklayers, shopkeepers and

domestic servants. There were also six wives and three children. All these were dumped on shore with their baggage, their Bibles, and their tracts, and after a short stay the *Duff* sailed away."

The missionaries "found the island every bit as bad as they had been led to expect. More whalers had arrived and three sailors who had taken up residence were adding to the general atmosphere of dissolution. Tu [Cook's Tu, now known as Pomare] was still there and, with the aid of some muskets given him by the *Bounty* mutineers, had set up a ramshackle little kingdom in which nothing was done to discourage either the old pagan customs or the new western vices. However, he was friendly at first and, although he was impervious to the missionaries' teaching, he allowed them to settle at Matavai Bay. Here they built their church and established their little colony."

The missionaries were befriended by Pomare I, who lived until 1805; yet they underwent many hardships, especially from the constant wars. Finally, they were forced to flee with Pomare II to New South Wales, returning in 1821 when Pomare II renounced heathenism.

By 1820, the London Missionary Society seemed to have accomplished what it set out to do in Tahiti. Morehead reports that Baron Thaddeus Bellingshausen, the Russian navigator who visited Tahiti in 1820, found the natives, though still gay and ebullient, changed beyond belief.

"All those who could wore European clothes, and both men and women had their heads shaved—that lovely gleaming black hair which once fell to the girls' waists was apparently regarded by the missionaries as both sinful and unsanitary. Tattooing had been discouraged, liquor was banned, and no one danced any more or played Tahitian music. Even the weaving of garlands of flowers was forbidden. Of prostitution there was not a sign, and instead of thieving they begged incessantly for trifles. The ruling clique no longer lived in huts open on all sides to the breeze, but in enclosed houses made of timber, and they slept in beds rather than on the ground. Human sacrifice with all other manifestations of the Tahitian religion

had long since been swept away, and the *arioi*, those votaries of free love, were married. Morality police roamed the countryside by night pouncing on illicit lovers.

"On Sunday all activity ceased, and the people attended church, the women wore hats on their shaven heads. By now a printing press had been set up and the Bible had been translated into Tahitian.

"The diet was much the same but the Tahitians now had oranges and lemons as well as European vegetables and, on ceremonial occasions, the nobles ate with plates, knives and forks. The *marae* had collapsed into heaps of stones and were overrun with rats."

Two observers sent out by the London Missionary Society also remarked about the change and reported about the native Sabbath. "Not a fire is lighted, neither flesh nor fruit is baked, not a tree is climbed, nor a canoe seen on the water, nor a journey by land performed, on God's holy day; religion—religion alone—is the business and delight of these simple-minded people on the Sabbath."

Missionary work in the Pacific Ocean had begun with Magellan (1480-1521), the Portuguese navigator. In a fortnight, it is said, he converted all the inhabitants of Cebu (one of the Visayan Islands of the east central Philippines) and the adjacent Philippine Islands. The Jesuits, Recollects, and Augustinians also worked in the Marianas and the Caroline Islands.

As for Tahiti and its environs, they had been visited by Pedro Fernandes de Queilros, the Portuguese navigator, in 1606; by Samuel

Wallis, the English circumnavigator, in the *Dolphin* in 1767; by Louis Antoine de Bougainville, the French navigator for whom the tropical shrub *bougainvillea* is named; by the ship *La Boudine* in 1768; and by James Cook, the English mariner and explorer, who observed the transit of Venus at Tahiti in 1769. An attempt at colonizing Tahiti in 1774 was followed by the visit of Lt. William Bligh, commanding the *Bounty*. He was there to obtain breadfruit plants for introduction into the West Indies.

What Ulfilas (311?-381) had been to the Goths, Saint Columba (521-97) to the Irish, Saint Augustine (?-604) to the English, Saint Boniface (680?-755) to the Germans, and Saint Anschar (801-65) to the Danes and Swedes, these Congregationalists and others who followed them were to the Tahitians and other South Pacific islanders.

The closing years of the nineteenth century were remarkable for the large number of centenary celebrations of missionary associations. One metallic memento of the London Missionary Society centenary is the medal illustrated on page 12. It depicts dramatically the hardships these reformers and evangelists endured in their efforts to transform "this patch of the Pacific into a respectable English suburb."

Author's note: In 1966, the London Missionary Society was merged with the Commonwealth Missionary Society, together forming the Congregational Council for World Missions, an English Congregational mission organization.

The FIDEM Congress: Reflections of a Collector

Alexis J. Hennebert

[The twenty-second FIDEM Congress and International Exhibition of Medallion Sculpture will be held June 1990 in Helsinki, Finland. Contact Dr. Alan Stahl, U.S. FIDEM representative and AMSA Board member, the

American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 155th Street, New York, NY, 10032, for further information. For those collectors who have not yet attended a FIDEM Congress, the following personal impressions of the twenty-

first Congress by a Belgian collector provide a glimpse of what you have been missing.]

Having recently become a member of FIDEM, I went to Colorado Springs on the 11th of September 1987 filled with curiosity and joy! The twenty-first FIDEM Congress was a revelation of the extraordinary development which has taken place in medallic art. More than 700 artists from 25 countries worldwide had chosen their most beautiful recent works. These were exhibited in an attractive and original manner by the American Numismatic Association at their offices in Colorado Springs.

The quality of the works exhibited bore witness to the real vitality of FIDEM, which was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. This meeting of medallists from all over the world—more than 200 designers, sculptors, engravers, and collectors—provided the opportunity to assess the enormous strides taken in the realm of artistic creation.

Design in the domain of the medal has changed greatly, and the present tendencies toward universal forms are examples of the diminishing stringencies in conception. Indeed, medals have been transformed during the past twenty years, being enhanced even more by the use of tri-dimensional sculpture. Contemporary artists feel freer with regard to material and form; their creativity and imagination are resulting in the shattering of all the criteria that had been tacitly accepted since the Renaissance. Although the conception of the structure remains, the geometry of the design is developing to the stage at which it disappears. Should we perceive in these changes the effect of applying new techniques in the engraving of metals and in the perfection of methods of striking and casting?

We cannot be sure. Attention needs to be drawn to the new expression of art unhindered by the constraints imposed by materials, shape or dimension. Many artists appear to prefer the liberty which is possible in sculpture and do not regard themselves as

heirs to the restrictive traditions of past centuries. In his brilliant talk, Tamás Sárkány (Sweden) agreed with Joseph Veach Noble (U.S.A.) on the interpretation of these new tendencies. It is, however, evident that questions arise.

These were taken up, very much to the point, by Reimo Heino (Finland), anxious to know if the time had come for a return to former standards. In his opinion, metal, whether bronze or precious, must remain the sole basic material. Intrusive substances must be resolutely excluded: resin, stone, and hardwood, for example, regardless of the reduction of the artist's possibilities.

Size is another criterion which causes medals to be precious to collectors. Except in rare cases a medal ought to be limited in size to a diameter enabling it to be admired when held with ease between the thumb and the middle finger. Its shape, whether round or not, reflects the personality of its creator, but it should be possible to limit the maximum thickness to 1/20th of its diameter. Finally, the patina is equally a work of art and must not be absent. It is the patina which brings out the softness and relief of faces and which creates the atmosphere of mystery needed in expressing the allegories, symbols, and myths on the medal.

The organizers of the Congress were, fortunately, very strict in selecting the medals—about 1,500—to be put on exhibition. They must be congratulated for the general presentation of this wonderful exhibition which was well worth the journey. We also express our gratitude to our American friends and congratulate them for the first-rate welcome and organization of the Congress and of the "Post-Congress Tour" due to the preparation and remarkable efficiency of the team under FIDEM Delegate Alan M. Stahl and Pat Yates and their charming collaborators.

May medallic art continue to delight us and may we hope that the next congress will bear continuing witness to the great vitality of numismatic art!

Copies of the U.S. and Canadian contributions to *FIDEM* '87 are available for \$6.00

each from George Cuhaj, AMSA Treasurer, Box 6021, Long Island City, NY 11106.

The Other Side of the Medal

Joseph Veach Noble

Most medals have two sides—which is one of their main advantages. Unlike drawings and paintings which have to make their complete statement on a single surface, medals can employ two surfaces to expand their message. In fact, the effectiveness of a medal may be judged by whether its two faces are relatively unrelated or whether they complement each other by reinforcing, modifying, or interacting in a meaningful manner.

A well known radio commentator always concludes his program with the phrase “Now you know the rest of the story.” So it is with a good medal. The obverse tells a story which seems complete in itself but, when you turn over the medal, the reverse tells “the rest of the story.”

A perfect example of this device is the medal featured on the cover, *The Prodigal Son* by Leonda Finke. On the obverse the scene shows the son leaving his family—literally walking off the face of the medal. It is a statement complete in itself. However, the reverse shows “the rest of the story” with the youth returning and being united with his parents in love. This Biblical parable presents the classic example of a problem and then its

solution. Artists for centuries have tried with varying success to represent this story in a painting. However, the two sides of a medal make it the perfect medium for this subject. This medal and all others illustrated in this article are in the new series of the Society of Medalists.

The meaning of one side of a medal may be modified or even contradicted by the other. In the case of *Vanitas* by Marika Somogyi, the obverse shows a beautiful nude woman admiring herself in a mirror. It is an engaging subject and seems to be a straight forward pretty scene. When the medal is turned over, a completely new meaning is apparent. There sits the devil peering back through the mirror at the woman who is guilty of vanity—one of the seven deadly sins of the medieval world. The devil will now claim another victim. The medal has been pierced through the mirror to facilitate the interaction of the two images.

Opposites lend themselves to very effective treatment on medals. The north pole and the equator are the locations for *Snow and Sand* by Patricia Verani. The obverse presents an Eskimo driving a dog sled over the Arctic snows, while the reverse shows an Arab riding



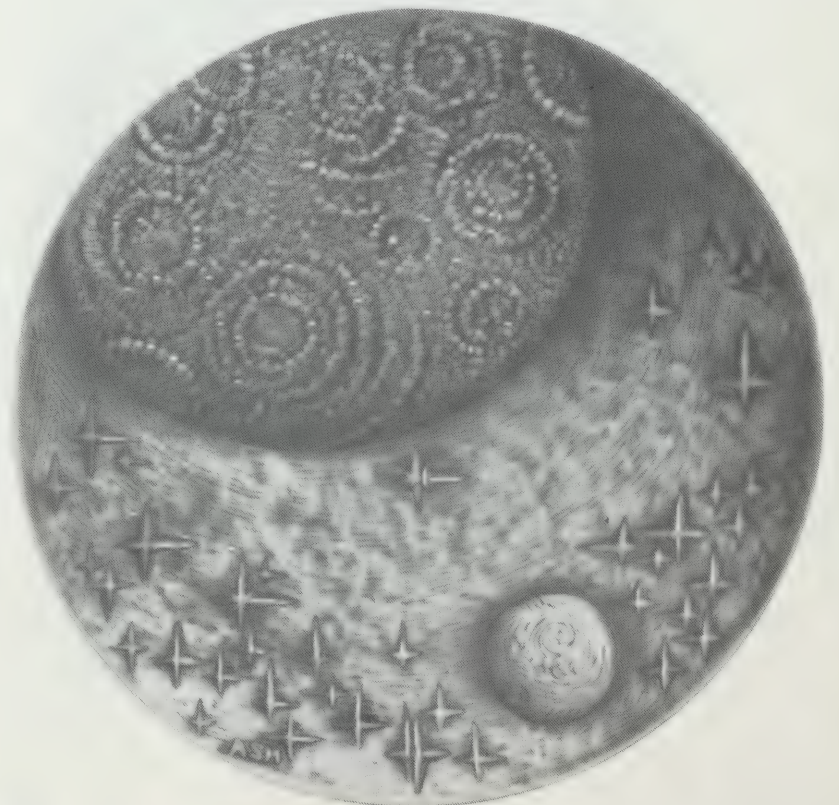


the “ship of the desert,” a camel, over the sands of the Sahara. The fact that both types of animals are of assistance to man unifies the medal.

Even abstract concepts such as world peace can be presented more forcefully by using both sides of a medal. In his *One Planet*, Alex Shagin combined a symbolic representation of the world with a highly realistic one. On the obverse the globe is shown ringed by dancing children. The reverse presents a view of the planet Earth from outer space surrounded by the moon and the stars. Clearly this image

says that here is our lonely planet, it is the only one we have, we must live on it in peace. The medal is curved with the globe and children on the convex side, while the concave side holds the Earth in space.

The value of the two sides of a medal is not double, but rather the square of the number—which yields four. Not only does a medal afford real relief, but it allows the interaction of obverse and reverse. Medalists should take advantage of this multiplying factor. The total effect will be greater than the sum of the parts.



Members' Work



Edward Grove, *Challenger Memorial*. Struck bronze or silver, Challenger 7 Space Monument Project.



Gerta Ries Wiener, *Justice Benjamin Nathan Cardozo*. Struck gold, silver, or bronze, Magnes Museum.

Addresses for ordering medals

Sandor Bodo, 6513 Highway 100, Nashville, TN, 37205

Challenger Space Monument Project, 9-17 Farview Ave., Danbury, CT, 06810

Magnus Museum, 2911 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA, 94705

Alex Shagin, 1319 Havenhurst Drive, Los Angeles, CA, 90076

Ronald Farrington Sharp, P.O. Box 8418, Ann Arbor, MI, 48107

Society of Medalists, Old Ridgebury Road, Danbury, CT, 06810





Alex Shagin, *Bicentennial of the American Constitution*. Silver, 75 mm, Shagin.



Robert Cronbach, *Sunrise and Moonrise*. Struck bronze, 116th issue of the Society of Medalists.



Sandor Bodo, *Julian Zolnay, American-Hungarian Sculptor*. Bronze, Bodo.





Marika Somogyi, *Sherlock Holmes*. Cast gold or silver, Magnus Museum.



Alex Shagin, *Marc Chagall*. Cast bronze, Shagin.

Marika Somogyi, *Marc Chagall*. Cast gold or silver, Magnus Museum.

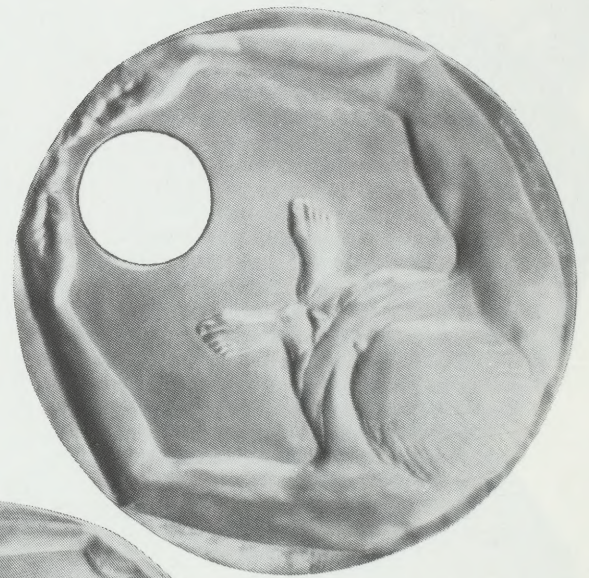




Alex Shagin, *Irving Berlin*.
Struck silver, 1 1/2 inches;
cast bronze, 4 inches, Shagin.



Alex Shagin, *Salvador Dali*.
Bronze, 3 inches, Shagin.



Ronald Farrington Sharp,
Untitled. Sharp.



Alex Shagin, *Sherlock Holmes*.
Struck silver or bronze, 2 1/4
inches, Shagin.

